UNITED
NATIONS

A

General Assembly

Distr.
GENERAL

A/CONF.166/PC/21/Add.1
2 August 1994

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

PREPARATORY COMMITTEE FOR THE WORLD
SUMMIT FOR SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT
Second session
New York, 22 August-2 September 1994
Item 4 of the provisional agenda*

OUTCOME OF THE WORLD SUMMIT FOR SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT: DRAFT DECLARATION AND DRAFT PROGRAMME OF ACTION

Views of Governments on a draft declaration and a draft programme of action

Note by the Secretary-General

Addendum

CONTENTS

Page

Switzerland 2

* A/CONF.166/PC/14.

SWITZERLAND

[21 July 1994]

1. The perspective and general orientation of the document (declaration and programme of action)

1.1 The aim, functions and essential components of social development

(a) The Government of Switzerland considers it essential to define social development or its aim so as to give direction to the document; such a definition should be reflected in an umbrella concept. The following is proposed:

(i) Take social well-being as the umbrella concept, which includes the concept of security (see definition below);

(ii) State, at the beginning of each of the two texts (declaration and programme of action), the aim of social development, which is to provide social well-being, i.e., the ability of every human being to satisfy his or her basic needs and to achieve a satisfactory quality of life within an environment of equity, social justice and human dignity and within a climate of security; social well-being is also designed to enable each individual to improve his ability to control his destiny, by means of activities in the economic, social, cultural and political fields and to participate in the choices and decisions concerning society;

(iii) Bring out clearly that social development policy must focus on the human person: social development must be achieved by human beings for their own benefit and it must ensure human dignity for all;

(iv) State (in the declaration and as the premise for the programme of action) that the framework of social development consists of social values and the evolution of social structures and relations, and that its essential components are equity, social justice and security, together with social cohesion, respect for basic human rights and non-discrimination, and finally the participation and empowerment of people;

(v) Use of the definition of the aim of social development, its framework and its essential components to determine, especially for the programme of action, criteria for use, particularly by national authorities and international organizations, in assessing the social situation, determining priorities and drawing up objectives to be achieved (see also sect. 2).

(b) The draft document of the Secretary-General covers only one function of social development, namely, remedying social ills. Similarly, the perspective of the document confines social policy basically to protecting the

most underprivileged, mainly by economic measures and by introducing a system of safety nets. Proposals are given below:

(i) Base the declaration and the programme of action on the recognition that the promotion of social development is fundamental to the life and future of any society: on the one hand, social development can contribute to solving both economic and social problems, and, on the other and above all, it is required to release the social forces essential for ensuring the harmonious development of societies, for the benefit of all, and to overcome obstacles lying in the way;

(ii) Advocate adoption of a new, broader view of social policy: social policy, in the narrow sense of the term, aimed at protecting the weakest and helping the underprivileged, is still essential and must be adapted to present-day economic and social conditions; however, it must be incorporated into a social development policy, forming in fact a policy for society, and must aim at meeting the conditions needed to ensure the social well-being of all;

(iii) Stress that the policy for society must also aim at eliminating exclusion and discrimination and ensuring equality of opportunity for all: it must aim at a society in which everybody can be an actor and a recipient of social well-being. Equality of opportunity concerns not only women but also other population groups;

(iv) Show, in addition, that social policy must go beyond the unilateral relationship of aid and protection and highlight what each person and each social group has to offer and must be in a position to offer; in that way, it must introduce a bilateral relationship of shared responsibility and exchange;

(v) Include the problems of migration in social policy.

1.2 Interaction between the social, the economic and the cultural and distinction between the means and the end

(a) In the draft text, the interdependence between the social, the economic and the cultural is obscured. As a result, no attempt is made to develop a systemic (or integrated) approach, which is, however, essential. The cultural dimension seems to be neglected. The following is proposed:

(i) Clearly advocate a systemic holistic approach which recognizes the interplay of the social, economic and cultural dimensions and the importance of political factors. (The systemic approach is, of necessity, interdisciplinary and interministerial, but goes even further);

(ii) Clearly take into account the cultural dimension;

(b) The draft text does not make a clear distinction between the means and the end. Financial means are presented as the driving force, while the social

factors, which are essential for ensuring social development, are ignored. Proposals are given below:

(i) Bring out the function of the social factors, particularly those mentioned in section 1.1 (a) (iv);

(ii) Stress that the aim is social well-being for all mankind, specify that economic development and a favourable economic climate are an essential but not a sufficient condition for the development of society and stress in this connection the importance of the macroeconomic framework (fiscal, budgetary and monetary policies);

(iii) Present financial means as an (important) instrument among others;

(iv) Recall the importance, in an active social policy, both of social investments (namely, health, education and social services) and of access for the most underprivileged to means of economic promotion (particularly, access to credits and means of production, as well as to support services). Priority must be given to these two types of measure;

(c) Due account must also be taken of the globalization of the economy. The following is proposed:

Highlight the social effects of the globalization of the economy and propose measures to ensure a fair distribution of the benefits, both within societies and internationally, and introduce the necessary corrective mechanisms without, however, challenging the principle of competition.

(d) The environment rightly occupies an important place in the draft text: however, it is out of proportion compared with the other components. The following is proposed:

Relativize the position of the environment; give the other determining factors - such as political will, social cohesion, social justice and equity - the place and the importance due to them.

1.3 Countries' responsibilities

The document (i.e., both the declaration and the programme of action) should clearly bring out the responsibility of each country:

(i) The responsibility of defining and putting into effect the policy designed to ensure social well-being devolves primarily on the countries themselves, i.e., both the Government and civil society;

(ii) Countries should be encouraged to determine the respective functions and responsibilities of the public sector and civil society and ensure optimum balance between them.

2. The three core issues of the Summit

The three issues are interdependent and it is important to bring out what they have in common. The following is proposed:

(i) In the declaration and in an introductory chapter in the programme of action, highlight what the three core issues of the Summit have in common, particularly the importance of citizens' participation and empowerment, equality of opportunity and a favourable macroeconomic environment;

(ii) Recommend that national authorities, international organizations, international financial institutions and the other bodies concerned incorporate social development objectives, particularly the eradication of poverty, into their economic and social policy, into their commercial policy and into their programmes;

(iii) Recall that it is vital to ensure coherence between economic policy and social policy and to keep a close eye on proper management of public affairs.

2.1 Combating poverty

Poverty arises from an economic situation and from a lack of power. The text obscures this second fact. The following is proposed:

(i) Stress in the declaration (and recall it in the programme of action) that an essential feature of poverty, apart from the lack of income, is the lack of power, that is to say, the lack of access to knowledge and know-how (which goes beyond access to basic education - in itself of capital importance), to productive resources (not only employment), to the public services, to participation in public life and to legal protection. Recall also the social and cultural consequences of poverty;

(ii) Aim at the eradication of poverty and not just its alleviation;

(iii) Stress that the satisfaction of basic needs for all - and these needs are specific as well as both economic and social: health, education, housing, employment (i.e., access to income), social and cultural life - is an essential condition for combating poverty and ensuring security;

(iv) Recall the importance of social investments and of access for the most underprivileged to means of economic promotion (see sect. 1.2 (b) (iv));

(v) Stress the importance of fiscal policy in combating poverty;

(vi) Propose criteria and objectives in the programme of action.

2.2 Employment

Employment is rightly accorded an important place in the draft text. The analysis appears, however, to disregard the non-economic aspects and only employment that produces a salary or monetary income appears to count. It is proposed that the perspective be expanded as follows:

(i) Recall that the promotion of productive and remunerative employment is a decisive factor in any social development policy and show that employment is an essential component in combating poverty;

(ii) Stress that an interdisciplinary approach is now essential in this field;

(iii) Improve analysis of the causes and forms of underemployment and unemployment, bearing in mind both the special contexts of the countries of the North and of the developing countries and the effects of the globalization of the economy;

(iv) Ensure that the concept of employment in the narrow sense (which assumes the existence of an employer) is abandoned and use the concept of remunerative employment or work. Give concrete recognition not only to the economic but also to the social and cultural value of work (or employment in the wider sense) and, at the same time, recognize the economic, social and cultural role of unpaid or not directly productive activities. Develop a concept of employment which takes in the economic, social and cultural dimensions;

(v) In employment policy, promote incentive measures that make for easier access to the labour market, rather than pursuing the path of compensation; avoid measures that make the labour market inflexible; bear in mind both the macroeconomic and the micro-economic levels;

(vi) Recall the importance of fiscal policy;

(vii) Encourage the search for new avenues such as the opportunities offered by job-sharing;

(viii) Establish criteria and, possibly, set objectives, as in combating poverty.

2.3 Social integration

The following is proposed:

(i) Present the aim of social integration; avoid restricting it to a means of improving the use of the productive potential of underprivileged or marginalized sections of the population; present the obstacles to and the factors favouring social integration;

(ii) Highlight the function of social cohesion, non-discrimination, equity and equality of opportunity as well as the self-realization, participation and empowerment of citizens;

(iii) Establish criteria and possibly set objectives (as for poverty and employment).

3. Form and content of the texts

The draft declaration and the draft programme of action are lengthy, sometimes repetitive and lack concision; their impact may well suffer as a result. There are no concrete guidelines that countries could use as a basis for action. The programme of action often fails to bring out the fundamental aspect but goes into detail so that it no longer gives direction to the action. The following is proposed:

(i) Make the text more concise (also avoid lengthy lists, which cannot be exhaustive);

(ii) Introduce the umbrella concept of social well-being (see sect. 1.1 (a) (i)), put the fundamental points of the declaration in concrete form and make them guiding principles; base the programme of action on these points;

(iii) State the goal to be achieved, in the declaration and in the programme of action (see sect. 1.1);

(iv) Introduce objectives in the programme of action (and possibly, for certain aspects, in the declaration; see sect. 1.1).

4. Terminology

(a) The declaration speaks of "social progress" and the programme of action of "social development". "Progress" implies only improvement, while "development" also implies evolution and the relation or interplay of forces that permit such evolution. It is proposed to use the term "social development" instead of "social progress";

(b) The two texts generally use the adjective "moral" rather than "ethical". (Moral refers to customs and habits, generally implying a judgement between good and bad behaviour and is closely linked to individual cultures. There is no universal morality applying to all cultures and the right of other societies to a different morality must be recognized. Ethics (or the science of morality) implies recognition of what is good beyond differences of culture: there are universal ethical values, despite cultural differences, e.g., human rights.) The following is proposed:

(i) Avoid the word "moral" and use the word "ethical" wherever appropriate;

(ii) Guard against allowing the recognition of universal ethical values to be eroded and stand by the call to comply with them.